

Training 2-1: School Registration Process Overview



Welcome to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction's training module on the Private School Choice Programs. We will refer to the Private School Choice Programs as "Choice" or "Choice program" throughout this training. The Choice program is governed by Wis. Stat. §§ 119.23 and 118.60, as well as Wis. Admin. Codes ch. PI 35 and 48. Provisions of this training module are subject to statutory and rule changes.

This training module will discuss the school registration process.

Training Resources

This presentation will provide an overview of the school registration process for the Choice Programs.

In-depth trainings on various topics are available on the PSCP training webpage: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/on-demand-training> or by clicking:

Informational Bulletins on various topics are available on the PSCP bulletins webpage: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/bulletins> or by clicking:

Important Dates and Reminders are available on the PSCP School Information webpage: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/school-information>

Statutes and Rules for the PSCP are available on this website: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/statutes>

There are a number of training resources for schools available on the Choice Program website.

In-depth trainings on specific topics.

Informational Bulletins on various topics.


Important Dates and Reminders

In addition, a link to the statutes and administrative rules can be accessed on the slide above.

We invite you to review these additional resources and become familiar with the rules and statutes governing the Choice programs.

Continuing versus New Schools

- Continuing School: A school that is currently participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP), Racine Parental Choice Program (MPCP), and/or Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (MPCP).
- New School: A school that is not currently participating in the MPCP, RPCP, or WPCP.




Continuing schools are schools that are currently participating in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, known as the MPCP, Racine Parental Choice Program, known as the RPCP, or Wisconsin Parental Choice Program, known as the WPCP. All three programs together are referred to as the Private School Choice Programs or Choice.

New schools are any schools that are not currently participating in the Private School Choice Programs. If a school currently participates in one of the Choice programs and decides to participate in an additional Choice program, they are considered a continuing school, not a new school.

New Schools – Two Types

- An “existing private school” is a school that, as of August 1st and January 10th before applying for the Choice program, meets both of the following requirements:
 - Was open with enrolled students for longer than 12 consecutive months.
 - Has at least 40 students or has three or more grades with enrolled students.
- “New private school” (start-up school) is a school that doesn’t meet the requirements for an existing private school.



Wisconsin statute requires that new schools to the Choice program meet additional requirements if they are considered a “new private school.” If the school is an “existing private school,” it does not need to meet these additional requirements. An “existing private school” is a school that was open with enrolled students for longer than 12 consecutive months and has at least 40 students enrolled at the school or has three or more grades with enrolled students. Since schools that are “new private schools” are required to meet certain requirements by August 1st the school year before they participate in the Choice program, the school must meet these requirements as of August 1st and January 10th.

If a school would be considered a “new private school” but is operated or managed by a school already participating in the Choice programs that meets certain participation requirements, the school is exempt from having to meet the “new private school” requirements.

New Private School Requirements

- If school is considered a new (start-up) school, it must meet additional requirements a year before it can participate in the Choice program. These additional requirements are covered in a separate in-person training.
- However, a new school is not subject to these additional requirements if it is operated by a governing board that operates a private school that is currently participating in the Choice program that hasn't been issued a legal order in the last three years.

Wisconsin statute specifies that schools that are considered “new private schools” must complete certain requirements in advance of the other schools. For example, “new private schools” must complete an Intent to Participate in the Choice programs by August 1st of the school year prior to when the school would like to participate in the Choice program. They are also required to obtain preaccreditation by December 15th of the school year prior to when the school would like to participate in the Choice program. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) notifies private schools that registered as a new private school by December 31st if they met the requirements as of that date. If the school meets the requirements, it must complete the January registration process we will talk about next.

If a “new private school” did not meet the requirements, they are not eligible to participate in the Choice program for the upcoming school year.

School Registration Process Guidance

- Cover letter regarding school registration
 - New school
 - Continuing school
- School registration checklist
- School registration information can be found on this webpage:
<https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/school-registration>

Schools must read the cover letter explaining the school registration process before completing any of the required items. DPI provides a version of this letter for new schools to the Choice program and a version for schools that are continuing in the Choice program.

The other resource that is available is the school registration checklist. This checklist provides a list of the items that schools must complete in order to participate in the Choice programs. It is extremely important that schools use this checklist to ensure they have completed all of the required steps of the registration process.

School Registration Webpage

- School Registration Information webpage includes:
 - Directions to Access the Intent to Participate (ITP) in the Online Application System (OAS)
 - Registration Forms
 - Cover Letter Regarding School Registration
 - Important Information to Review
 - Training Information and links
 - School Registration Checklist

The [school registration page](#) has all forms, except for the Notice of School's Intent to Participate (ITP) which is accessed via the Online Application System (OAS), that schools must complete and submit to the DPI by the due date of the ITP as well as information on training.

As noted on the previous page, schools must read the Cover Letter Regarding School Registration before completing any registration forms, and the DPI recommends schools use the School Registration Checklist available on the [school registration page](#) to ensure all required items to register for the Choice program are completed by the due date. These items are available on the [school registration page](#).

Schools should also review the Important Information to Review section of the [school registration page](#) prior to completing the registration forms.

Please note that all of the school registration forms and the auditor fee are due to the DPI by the due date of the ITP, unless otherwise noted in the cover letters. If a school fails to meet this deadline, the school will not be eligible to participate in the Choice program during the upcoming school year. Therefore, it is in the school's best interest to submit these required forms as soon as possible so that any errors or questions can be resolved well in advance of the deadline.

Forms Required to Participate

- Intent to Participate (ITP), which includes:
 - School and Choice Administrator Information
 - Choice Programs
 - Open Application Periods
 - All School Grades and Choice Program Grades
 - Summer School Indication
 - Surety Bond Calculation
 - Agreements
- Nonrefundable Auditor Fee and Form
- Designee Authorization Form (Optional)
- Disclosure of Information Form and required policies (First year only)
- Hours of Instruction (First year only)
- Combined Private School Agreement (Optional)
- Complete Required Training (First year only)

In order to participate in the Choice program, the school must complete the Intent to Participate (ITP). There is a training module that explains the ITP in detail on the Choice training webpage.

The ITP includes:

- General school and Choice administrator information
- Choice programs in which the school will participate
- Open application periods during which the school will accept Choice program student applications
- All grades the school offers and grades the school will offer for each Choice program in which the school participates
- An indication of whether the school will provide summer school
- A calculation of the school's surety bond amount for new schools and for continuing schools, if applicable
- Agreements for the random selection, program compliance, and disqualified persons

Additionally, all schools that participate are required to annually pay a nonrefundable auditor fee. The school must mail the auditor fee form and a cashier's check for the required amount to the address on the form.

Choice schools may appoint additional designees to verify student applications and assist the administrator with reports. Complete the Student Application Designee form to authorize those appointments.

New schools participating in the Choice program must complete the Hours of Instruction form and the Disclosure of Information form with attached policies and board member information. These forms are explained in detail in a later training.

Private schools new to either the WPCP or the RPCP may enter into an agreement to be subject to the same governing board as a private school currently participating in the WPCP or the RPCP. With this agreement, prior year attendance requirements would not be required for two years for students applying to the new school. See the Combined Private School Agreement slide later in this presentation for additional information.

Intent to Participate

- The ITP indicates the school's intent to participate in the Choice program for the upcoming school year and agreement to comply with all program requirements.
- The ITP must be completed, electronically signed, and submitted by the individual who will serve as the school's Choice administrator.
- Schools will complete the ITP in OAS.
- New schools may email privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov to request access to OAS.
- See the ITP training module on the Choice Training webpage.

The ITP indicates the school's intent to participate in the Choice programs in the upcoming year. In the ITP, the school will be required to indicate it will comply with all program requirements.

The ITP must be completed electronically and submitted by the Choice administrator. The Choice administrator is the individual who is responsible for the Choice requirements.

For more detailed information on the ITP, see the ITP training module on the Choice Training webpage.

New Schools: To request access to OAS, the new school's Choice administrator must email the following information to privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov:

1. *Private School Code:* See the [Private School Directory](#) for the code. Schools may also access the directory from the [Private School Choice Programs homepage](#) (fourth from the bottom on left menu bar). Schools that do not have a private school code may have been required to meet certain requirements by the prior August 1 to be eligible to participate in the Choice program in the upcoming school year. See the [school registration page](#) for additional information.
2. *School legal name:* The school's legal name should match the school's name in the Private School Directory. If the school's legal name is not correct in the Private School Directory, please also indicate this in the email, and the DPI will provide next steps.
3. *School's Choice administrator legal name:* Include the Choice administrator's first and last legal name.
4. *School's Choice administrator phone number:* Include school phone number for administrator.
5. *Request statement:* A statement that the Choice administrator is requesting access to OAS for the new school to complete the ITP for the upcoming school year.

The DPI will provide OAS user access information to the new school's Choice administrator that the administrator may use to sign into OAS and submit the ITP. Choice administrators of new schools are also required to complete OAS training and an online quiz by January 31, but do not have to complete the training or quiz prior to submitting the ITP in OAS. See the New School Training Requirements section of this document for additional information.

Continuing Schools: To access the ITP form in OAS:

1. See below for the user name a continuing school should use to sign in.
 - For schools that participate in the Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP) and other programs, the school must use its MPCP OAS user name and password to complete and submit the ITP form for the upcoming school year.
 - For schools that participate in the Wisconsin Parental Choice Program (WPCP) and Racine Parental Choice Program (RPCP) but not the MPCP, the school must use its WPCP OAS user name and password to complete and submit the ITP form for the upcoming school year.
 - For schools that participate in one Choice program (MPCP, RPCP, or WPCP), the school must use that OAS user name and password to complete and submit the ITP form for the upcoming school year.
2. Next, click "Intent to Participate" on the left OAS menu bar.
3. The school may indicate it will participate in one or multiple programs when completing and submitting the ITP form in OAS for the upcoming school year. The school is not required to participate in the program under which it submits the ITP if the school does not intend to participate in that program for the upcoming school year.
4. Designees for the school may enter information in the ITP form in OAS, but may not submit the form.

Choice Administrator Requirements

- Either the sole owner of the school or an individual appointed by the operating organization of the school.
- Must meet the educational credential requirements with one of the following:
 - At least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education.
 - A teaching or administrator's license issued by the DPI.
- May not be a disqualified person.
- See the [Staff Credential Bulletin](#) for additional information.


The Choice administrator must either be an owner of the private school or an individual appointed as the Choice administrator by the school's governing body.

Additionally, the Choice administrator must have at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education or a teacher or administrator license issued by the DPI. In order to determine if an institution is accredited, the Choice administrator should review the US Department of Education webpage. The institution must be listed on this webpage to be considered accredited. For additional information on the educational credential requirements for Choice administrators, see the Staff Credentials Bulletin available on the Choice Bulletins webpage.

Finally, a Choice administrator must not be a disqualified person.

Disqualified Persons

- A disqualified person is a person who meets one of the following:
 - Had a controlling ownership in a school at the time the school was terminated from the program;
 - Was an owner, officer, director, trustee, administrator, or administrator's designee at the time the school was terminated from the program; or
 - Was an individual responsible for the action that led to the private school's termination from the Choice program.



The Choice administrator may not be a disqualified person. A disqualified person is an individual who had a controlling ownership in, or was an owner, officer, director, trustee, administrator, or administrator's designee at the time a school was terminated from the Choice program. A disqualified person also includes an individual who was responsible for the action that led to the private school's termination from the Choice program.

It is important for the Choice administrator to be familiar with who a disqualified person is to ensure no disqualified persons are hired at the school. Additionally, a Choice administrator may be determined to be a disqualified person if they are an administrator when the school is barred or terminated from the Choice program.

Disqualified Persons (cont)

- A disqualified person may not be an owner, officer, director, trustee, administrator, administrator's designee or an individual with administrative, financial or pupil health and safety responsibilities, whether compensated or not, at another Choice school for seven years from the date of the order terminating or barring a school from participation.
- A school may be terminated if it retains a disqualified person.

A disqualified person may not be an owner, officer, director, trustee, administrator, administrator's designee or an individual with administrative, financial or pupil health and safety responsibilities, whether compensated or not, at another Choice school for seven years from the date of the order terminating or barring a school from participation in the Choice program. A list of individuals that are currently disqualified persons is available on the Choice School Information webpage.

Choice Administrator Requirements-Training

| | Choice Administrator of a School New to the Choice programs | Choice Administrator of a School Currently Participating in the Choice programs |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Online Training Courses | X | X |
| In-person Budget Training | X | |

The Choice administrator of a school new to the Choice programs must complete online training courses and an in-person training on the Choice program budget. The Choice administrator of a school that is currently participating in the Choice programs needs to complete the online training courses.

New Choice schools must complete the online training courses by a certain date in order to participate in the Choice program. Please refer to the School Registration Information webpage for the date by which the training must be completed.

The Choice administrator of a school new to the Choice programs is required to complete an in-person training on completing the Choice budget. This is required because new participants in the Choice program are required to complete a budget for the upcoming school year and provide it to the DPI by May 1st. This in-depth training will be a hands on training where the participants will complete a sample Choice budget in Excel. Choice schools are strongly encouraged to have their accountant and/or another individual that will assist with the preparation of the budget at this training.

Schools that are new to the program may want to consider having more than one individual, that meets the educational credential requirements to be an administrator, and attend the in-person budget training. This is because new schools may not change

their Choice administrator until after August 1st of their first year of participation unless the new administrator completed the in-person budget training.


Random Selection Plan

- MPCP and RPCP students:

- Schools must have a random selection plan to ensure students are selected on a random basis.
- Schools may use the plan already approved by the State Superintendent or develop their own plan. If the school develops their own plan, it must be approved by DPI by the due date of the ITP.

- WPCP students

- The DPI will conduct the random selection.




If the number of eligible applications received exceeds the number of seats available, a random selection must be held to determine which applications will be accepted.

For MPCP and RPCP students, the schools must have a random selection plan to determine how students will be selected. The school may decide if it would like to use the plan approved by the State Superintendent or develop their own plan. The plan approved by the State Superintendent is included in the ITP electronic form. If the school would like to develop its own plan, the plan must be approved by the DPI no later than the due date of the related ITP.

Under state law, no more than a certain percentage of a public school district membership may participate in the WPCP. DPI will complete the random selection for any school district that has more eligible applications than the number of students that may participate in the program.

MPCP & RPCP Random Selection Plan

- Schools may **only** accept Choice applications during the open application periods selected on the Intent to Participate form.
- If the number of eligible applications received during an open application period exceeds the number of seats available, schools must hold a random drawing to determine which applicants are accepted.



Schools may only accept Choice applications during the open application periods selected on the ITP. A later training will explain the open application periods in more detail. If the number of applications received by the school during the open application period exceeds the number of seats the school has available for Choice students, the school must hold a random drawing. All applications must have an equal chance of being selected in the random draw.

MPCP & RPCP Random Selection-Preferences

- A school **may** give preference to the following in the order of preference listed:
 1. Students who attended the private school under any Choice program during the prior year
 2. Their siblings
 3. Students who attended a different private school under any Choice program during the prior year
 4. Their siblings
 5. Siblings of students who have been randomly accepted to attend the private school under the Choice program who did not attend a private school under any Choice program in the prior year.
- The drawing must continue until all available seats are filled and a waiting list order is determined.

Wisconsin statute permits schools to give preference to certain pupils. The students that may receive preference are listed on this slide in the order that they may receive preference.

The random drawing must continue until all available seats are filled and a waiting list order is determined. In the MPCP and RPCP, schools may determine if a seat left vacant from a student withdrawal will be filled with a student from the waiting list. If the school decides to take students from the waiting list, the school must offer the seats in the order determined during the random drawing.

Schools that conduct their own random selection can choose whether or not they will apply these preferences. The school must determine which preferences it will use at the beginning of the year, if any, and apply them consistently throughout the year.

The DPI uses these preferences when completing the random selection for the WPCP.

Random Selection Plan (cont)

- Random selection, if required, must occur within one week after the end of the open application period and before the next count date.
- Schools must notify all MPCP and RPCP applicants in writing, within 60 days after the end of the application period during which an application is received, of acceptance or non-acceptance at the school.
- WPCP applicants who are determined ineligible by the school must also be notified in writing.
- If a student's application is not accepted, the letter must indicate the reason for non-acceptance.

If the school decides to adopt the random selection agreement approved by the State Superintendent, it must complete the random selection within one week after the open application period and before the next count date, whichever is earlier.

Schools must notify all MPCP or RPCP applicants if they were accepted or not accepted into the applicable Choice program at the school. This notification must be in writing and sent within 60 days after the end of the application period during which an application is received. WPCP applicants must also be notified in writing if the application is determined ineligible by the school.

If a student's application is not accepted, the letter must indicate the reason or reasons for non-acceptance.

Surety Bond Calculation

- The ITP will calculate, based on number of FTE the school entered, the amount needed for a surety bond required if the school:
 - Decides to provide a surety bond rather than budget for its first year of participation in the program.
 - Had a surety bond in the prior year and has not yet met the financial requirements to no longer provide the bond.
 - For more information on surety bonds see the surety bond training on <https://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs/school-training>

New schools may choose to provide a surety bond by May 1 rather than submit a budget. The intent to participate form calculates the amount of the surety bond based on the number of FTE reported on the ITP. Use this number when working with your insurance company to obtain a bond.

Schools that had a surety bond in the prior year are required to obtain a bond in subsequent years until certain financial requirements are met. For more information on the surety bond requirements see the surety bond training module on the Choice Training webpage.

Combined Private School Agreement (Optional)

- Private schools new to the WPCP or the RPCP may enter into an agreement with a currently participating private school.
- Review the [Combined Private Schools and Prior Year Attendance Bulletin](#).
- Provide agreement to DPI by January 10.
- Disclosure of Information form must be signed by governing board of currently participating private school.

Private schools new to either the WPCP or the RPCP may enter into an agreement to be subject to the same governing board as a private school currently participating in the WPCP or the RPCP. With this agreement, prior year attendance requirements would not be required for two years for students applying to the new school. More information can be found in the [Combined Private Schools and Prior Year Attendance Bulletin](#).

New schools interested in a combined school agreement must email a completed, signed agreement to privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov by January 10 and must submit the Disclosure of Information Form to the DPI signed by the governing board of the currently participating private school.

Designee Authorization Form

- Choice administrators may identify individuals to assist with processing Choice student applications, known as designees.
- Choice administrators must identify designees by completing a [Designee Authorization form](#).
- An administrator may designate up to three individuals to assist in processing student applications.

The Choice administrators may identify individuals to assist with the processing of student applications. These individuals are known as designees. In order to authorize designees, the Choice administrator must complete a Designee Authorization form. This form allows for the Choice administrator to designate up to three individuals to assist in processing student applications.

The designee authorization form is available on the School Registration Information webpage. A link to this webpage is available on the slide.

Designee Authorization Form

- The designee form may be submitted at any time during the school year.
- The designee form must be signed by the Choice Administrator and designees and is emailed to privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov.

The designee authorization form can be submitted at any time during the year. Schools new to the Choice program should provide the Designee Authorization form by the due date of the ITP.

The designee form must be signed by the Choice Administrator and the designees and should be scanned and sent to DPI by email.

Designee Authorization Form

- Designees will not be given access to the OAS until:
 - A Designee Authorization form is on file at DPI; and
 - Training has been completed.
 - Training requirements can be found on the [Student Application Processing](#) webpage

In addition to completing the Designee Authorization form, designees must complete training before they will be given access to OAS. OAS is the system used to process student applications.

Part of the required Choice administrator training includes the designee training. Once the designee or Choice administrator training is completed, DPI will mail the designee or Choice administrator their OAS user name and password. Mailing this information can take approximately two weeks. The student open application periods begin on February 1st. Therefore, if the designee will assist with processing applications at the beginning of the open application periods, the designee should try to complete the training at least two weeks in advance of February 1st. As a reminder, Choice administrators of new schools are required to complete the online training by the date specified on the School Registration Information webpage.

If you have questions regarding the training, contact the Choice team using the contact information at the end of this presentation.

For more information on the requirements an individual must complete to gain access to OAS, see the Choice Administrators, Designees, and Obtaining an OAS Password training available on the Student Application Processing webpage.

Intent to Offer Summer School

- If the school will provide summer school in the upcoming summer it must:
 - Indicate on the Intent to Participate.
 - Review the [summer school bulletin](#).

If the school will be offering summer school, the Choice administrator should read the summer school bulletin, and indicate your intentions on the Intent to Participate. The summer school bulletin is available on the Choice Bulletins webpage.

Questions

Website: <http://dpi.wi.gov/sms/choice-programs>

Email: privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov

Phone: 1-888-245-2732 ext. 3



If you have any questions about the information discussed in this training, please see the Private School Choice Programs homepage. The left menu bar of the Private School Choice Programs homepage has resources for both schools and parents.

Choice schools may also contact the Choice team at privateschoolchoice@dpi.wi.gov, or call the toll-free number at 1-888-245-2732, extension 3 with questions.